

the end, beginning or somewhere in-between by eddiefuckinkaspbrak

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Summary:

“How are you Richie?”

“I’m good!” Richie grinned, glancing behind them at the cradle. “Daddy said there was a baby Prince and I was to be careful. Can I say hello?” Frank glanced back to his wife, who nodded and he turned back to Richie, offering out his hand.

“Of course you may, come with me,” Frank let the boy up the steps, Went following closely behind the two of them and as they reached the crib, he reached down and picked Richie up, so he could see inside. “Richard, meet Edward.”

The baby inside the crib was wide awake, staring up at Richie with his bright eyes, gurgling every so often. Unable to help himself, Richie reached a hand into the crib, allowing the baby to wrap his tiny fingers around Richie’s pointer finger, clinging to him tightly.

Frank let out a snort and Went laughed alongside him.

“I think our children are going to get along just fine my friend, don’t you think?” Frank asked and Went nodded his head, glancing back at the two children, three years in age apart, but still looking inseparable.

“I think you’re right.”

[or just another royalty au that I couldn't help but write...]

the end, beginning or somewhere in-between

“Alright Richie, remember what I told you before we came here okay?” Wentworth Tozier spoke to his three year old son, Richard, as they stood outside of the large doors to lead them into the throne room of the palace. Wentworth was the Captain of the Royal Navy as well as King Frank’s best friend and right hand man.

Richie looked up, his brown eyes staring back into his fathers as he nodded his head. As he did so, some of the curls fell out of place, covering his eyes, “Yes daddy,” he smiled a toothy grin. “Be careful with the baby Prince.”

With one single nod, Went took his son’s hand and pushed open the door, stepping into the throne room where King Frank and Queen Sonia were sitting, a cradle placed between them containing their new baby boy, Edward. It was a special occasion, as the Frank and Sonia had been trying for a baby for years, with little to no success. A few years back, Went remembered, Sonia had suffered a miscarriage and almost passed away herself due to blood loss. After that, the Kingdom of Derry had been in disarray, wondering if they would ever have an heir to the throne.

However, now they did, in the form of a small baby boy. Edward had been born three weeks early, which panicked both Frank and especially Sonia, but they had both pulled through. Went smiled as he approached the two of them, nodding his head in greeting as Richie bowed also, as practiced.

“May I offer my congratulations, Your Majesty,” Went started. “Apologies for not visiting sooner, the journey back from Augusta took longer than I initially planned.”

Frank stood up with a smile on his face, stepping down from the throne and pulling Went into a hug, “Do not apologise. How was your trip my friend?” He asked and Went just nodded his head, a move he would do when he wished to talk about something at a later time. “I see.” The King glanced down at Richie, kneeling to his level and smiling. “How are you Richie?”

"I'm good!" Richie grinned, glancing behind them at the cradle. "Daddy said there was a baby Prince and I was to be careful. Can I say hello?" Frank glanced back to his wife, who nodded and he turned back to Richie, offering out his hand.

"Of course you may, come with me," Frank let the boy up the steps, Went following closely behind the two of them and as they reached the crib, he reached down and picked Richie up, so he could see inside. "Richard, meet Edward."

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Of course, Frank and Wentworth were right about their children. As Edward, nicknamed Eddie by Richie, grew up, he and Richie were practically inseparable. Even when the Prince was too young to walk and talk, Richie still spend all of the time he could, playing baby friendly games.

When Eddie finally reached the prime age of four, Richie was excited to finally show him how to play big boy games, much to the chagrin of Queen Sonia, who wanted to keep her baby boy wrapped up in a safety blanket. They would play pirates and thieves and knights in the gardens of the palace.

During the times when Eddie had to take his lessons, or spend time with his family, Richie would take lessons on the ship with his father, gearing him up for his inevitable transition into Captain when his father retires. As he grew older and into his teenage years Richie

found out that he would still much rather spend time with Eddie than with anyone else in the world.

“Dad wants me to go on one of his missions with him,” Richie muttered as he and Eddie lay on the grass in the gardens of the Palace, watching the clouds and pointing out shapes. He was seventeen to Eddie’s fourteen and his father thought it was time he experienced the open sea first hand.

Eddie shot up, his blonde hair falling into his eyes as he frowned, “For how long?” He asked. “Your dad goes away for months at a time, are you saying I won’t be seeing you for a month? Maybe more?” The look in Eddie’s eyes was killing Richie, but he knew that this day was going to come sooner or later. He just wished that it was later, much later.

“I’m not sure, Eds,” Richie sighed, running a hand through his mop of curls. His mother had been pestering him to cut it for weeks now, but when he brought up the idea to Eddie, he had caused a fit, so he refused to cut it. “Could be a week, a few weeks, or a few months. I suppose it really just depends.”

The pout on Eddie’s face was almost enough to make Richie beg his father to not take him, but he knew that he needed to go. He was seventeen now and he needed to start acting like the adult he was becoming. Eddie crossed his arms, “You’ll keep in touch with me right? Write me letters?”

Richie nodded his head enthusiastically, “Of course Eds! I’ll send you letters all the time, you know I will. Don’t worry too much, I’ll be back before you know it.”

“I hope you’re right,” Eddie mumbled, just as he heard his tutor yell for him to start his lessons. “Bye Rich,” he smiled, and without thinking he leaned in and pressed a kiss to Richie’s cheek before getting up and heading back into the palace.

As his best friend walked away, Richie felt his cheeks burn and he shook his head, heading back into town to his house. When he stepped through the door, his dad informed him they would be leaving in a few days, and that they would be gone for a month. He

spent those days preparing, talking to his dad about what they would be doing as it was important for him to focus.

Richie never saw Eddie again until the day of his departure, as the royal family all took the time to come to the harbour and see off the Royal Vessel. Their eyes met and Eddie smiled softly before stepping forward, a thick envelope clenched in his hand. He pushed it out to Richie and he bit the inside of his cheek, accepting it from the Prince. "What's this?"

"My letter to you," Eddie smiled, clearly proud of himself. "I've been writing it since you told me you'd be leaving soon." He shrugged a little, his smile turning into a shy one, cheeks flushed red. Richie was so focused on him that he missed the looks his father was sharing with Frank.

"Thanks Eds, I'll make sure to read it when we are out at sea." Richie winked and slipped the letter into his satchel and before he could talk himself out of it, he wrapped his arms around Eddie in a hug, holding him close. "I'll be back for your birthday, I'll bring you something amazing. Okay?"

"Okay," Eddie nodded, stepping back and looking as though he was about to cry. "Be safe?"

Richie nodded, "Always am."

* * * * *

Richie,

Please don't laugh at me, I've never actually written a letter before, especially to someone that I am so used to talking to in person every day. I wanted you to have something to remember me by, so I made a bracelet for you that is also inside the envelope. I know you're most certainly laughing at me but I don't care. I like the thought of you having something from me when you're out there at sea. Be careful yeah? I need you to come back and keep pestering me in that way you know I love.

According to my dad, you're scheduled to be back the day before my birthday. If it all goes according to plan would you come see me the night

before? I probably will be so busy with other people that we won't get a second and I really would like to see you. Don't laugh.

I say that a lot don't I? Don't laugh at me. The thing is, I really like your laugh and I'm really going to miss it when you're gone. You better bring me back something nice Tozier, I swear to god. You're my eyes out there, you have to experience everything that you know I can't. For me, right?

Also, I slipped a map into this letter, with all the places I'd love to visit. If you happen to cross any one of them would you bring me back a keepsake?

See you when you get back,

Your Eds.

** * * * **

Eds,

I can't believe you wrote me a goodbye letter and even made me a little bracelet. I promise that I'll take care of it to the best of my ability. Just so you know, I wasn't laughing at you. You want to know why? Because I was already missing you and this letter helped with that just a little bit. You really are my best friend and I'm going to miss you a lot!

I promise that the second I get back to Derry I'll come and see you. I wouldn't want to miss your birthday for the world! Again, I'm not laughing, why would you ever suggest such a thing!

Laughing is my speciality, isn't it? You're going to be so bored in that palace without me to make you smile, your highness. Not to worry, I'll be back soon and I swear I'll have something pretty for you. The best of the best, just for you because you are the best of the best.

The map is pinned to the wall in my cabin. I'll do my best to tick off as much as I can, just for you.

Miss you already.

Rich.

As the years passed, Richie went out on more and more missions with his father, eventually working his way up to second in command by the time he reached the prime age of twenty one. Each time he embarked on a mission, he made a point of visiting a place on Eddie's map and picking something up for him. He never missed the looks his crew gave him, yet he never said anything about it. His relationship with Eddie was his business and his business alone.

"Hi," A voice spoke softly from behind him and Richie jumped, whipping his head around to see Eddie standing by his open window. "Thought I'd try and be you for a change."

Richie let out a laugh, taking a few deep breaths to calm himself down. "You scared me. What are you doing here? It's hours past your curfew." Eddie just shrugged and crossed the room, taking a seat on the edge of Richie's bed, picking at a few stray threads of the sheets. "What's up, Eds?"

"You're leaving again tomorrow," Eddie sighed, looking up at Richie again. "You'll be away for Christmas, won't you? I heard my dad talking and it's going to take a while this time. You won't be here for Christmas."

Somehow, Richie knew that that was the reason Eddie was here. Normally, they didn't see each other the night before Richie left and instead exchanged the first letter at the harbour the following morning. The fact that Eddie had sneaked out of the palace so late at night to see him, meant that something was seriously wrong. "I-yeah. I won't be here for Christmas, Eds."

Eddie swallowed and Richie could see the tears in his eyes. Fuck. Before he could say anything, Eddie let out a breath and stared at the ceiling. "I know- I know that it's such a small thing to be worried about. It's just Christmas," he laughed stressfully. "But I had- there was a gift I wanted to give you and well- fuck I won't be able to now and it's thrown me off course a little."

Now *that* caught Richie's attention and he tilted his head to the side, "Can't you give it to me now? Or when I get back?"

"I don't want to wait that long," Eddie whispered, his eyes finally looking right into Richie's. "Close your eyes. Please, for me?"

Unable to deny Eddie anything, Richie nodded his head and let his eyes fall closed, his breathing picking up just a little. The fact that he had no idea what Eddie was going to give him, and why it was so important that it couldn't wait was driving his mind crazy. He was so lost in his thoughts that he didn't even realise Eddie had moved closer until he was sitting on his lap, straddling his thighs. "Eds?" Richie breathed, keeping his eyes closed.

"Shh," Eddie whispered, his fingers moving into Richie's curls, running through them. "Just- let me please..." Richie didn't move as Eddie's lips ghosted over his cheeks, his nose and then over his lips. He paused for a few seconds and Richie thought that he was going to die before Eddie finally closed the distance between them, kissing Richie firmly on the lips, tightening his fingers into his hair.

Richie froze up for just a second, before he realised that his wildest dream was literally coming true and he responded eagerly. He wrapped a firm arm around Eddie's waist, resting it on the small of his back as their lips met, over and over again, unable to stop. When the need to breathe became too much to ignore, Richie pulled away, breathing heavily against Eddie's lips that were far too reluctant to move away. "What- what was that?"

Eddie blinked his eyes open, glancing at Richie as he too, tried to catch his breath, "Uh- a kiss?" He whispered. "I- was it too much? Have I been reading this all wrong?"

"What- no!" Richie shook his head. "No fuck- didn't you feel me kissing you back? You just made my wet dream come true I just-didn't expect it..." He let out a disbelieving chuckle. "Me, Eds? Really? Are you sure it's me you want?"

Eddie blinked at him, as though Richie had grown an extra head and he shook his head, leaning in to give Richie another, this time much softer, kiss on his lips. "Richie, I've been in love with you since I was fourteen years old...you are definitely the only person I want. Do you want me?"

Did Richie want Eddie . The question sounded totally ridiculous as he thought it back. “Eds, fuck, of course I want you. I’ve been pushing down my feelings for you for so long, because you were my best friend, you were also much younger and you are the Prince! That’s a pretty major factor.”

“I don’t care about that,” Eddie shook his head, shifting in Richie’s lap to get more comfortable. “I want to be with you, and I wanted to tell you before you left me again. It’s not something that could be said over a letter.” He reached up and twirled one of Richie’s curls around his finger. “I still can’t believe you never cut your hair because I said I liked the curls.”

Richie barked out a laugh, shaking his head, “Eds, my love, I am so incredibly whipped for you. You could ask me to run down the Royal Mile naked and I would do it.” It was meant to come out as a joke, but the only funny thing was that he was deadly serious. Eddie could ask anything of him and he would do his best to fulfil his wish.

“What if I asked you to stay?” Eddie asked, looking into his eyes. “Would you stay?”

“Eds...” Richie trailed off. “You know if I could stay, I would right?” He asked. “I would stay with you forever if I could but- but I’m training to be Captain, for when my Dad steps down. I need to go out on these missions.”

Eddie sighed, resting his head on Richie’s shoulder, “I know, I’m sorry I asked.” They fell into a comfortable silence, the hours ticking by on the clock next to Richie’s bed. When it was close to three am, Eddie sat up. “I should go, I don’t want people thinking I’ve run away, or been kidnapped.”

“Alright,” Richie hummed and sat back, allowing Eddie to slip off of his lap and back onto the floor. He stood up and stretched before wrapping a hand around Eddie’s wrist, tugging him back in closer, cupping his cheeks and kissing him gently. “I’ll be back before you know it,” he whispered, kissing his nose.

“I hope you’re right.”

Richie watched Eddie slip out his window and head back to the palace. He knew he should get a few hours sleep before they left the following morning, but he couldn't calm his mind down enough. Eddie wanted him just as much as he wanted Eddie. They had *kissed* . For the rest of the night, until the sun came up, Richie stared at the ceiling with a shit eating grin on his face. He realised two things that night.

One; he was absolutely head over heels in love with Eddie.

Two; the second he arrived back in Derry, he was going to ask King Frank for Eddie's hand in marriage.

* * * * *

The ship docked back in the Derry Harbour late on the day after Christmas. It was cold, some flickers of snow landing on the boardwalk as everyone bid their goodbyes and headed to their homes to spend the remaining time with their families. It would be a nice surprise, since they weren't due back until after the New Year. Richie and his dad were the last to step off the ship, his dad giving him a look as he headed in the opposite direction of their home.

"Richie?"

Richie turned around, a nervous smile on his lips, "I'll be home soon, dad. I just have...I just have to do something first. Okay?" His dad just nodded, turning and heading towards the house as Richie walked up the Royal Mile heading straight for the Palace.

He knew that King Frank would still be awake, he always was. The guards at the gate nodded to him as he stepped past them, stopping outside the King's study and knocking lightly three times. A voice from behind the door called for him to enter, and Richie turned the handle, opening the door and stepping inside.

"Your Majesty, I apologise for the late audience--"

Frank cut him off by standing up and pulling him into a hug. "You are home early, what a lovely surprise." He grinned as he stepped back. "How can I help you, Richard?"

Suddenly, Richie's stomach was full of butterflies and his hands began to shake with nerves. "Right uh, I never really thought about this before I came here I just- came on a whim you know," he swallowed, rubbing the back of his neck. "I don't know if you've spoken to Eddie...about uh...me?"

"Eddie has mentioned you, yes," Frank nodded. "You don't have to be nervous around me, I hope you would be sure of that by now. You are like my family." He patted the spare seat next to him and Richie sat down, his leg bouncing.

"I love him, Your Majesty." Richie started. They might be as close as a family, but Richie was about to ask a very important question, and titles were necessary. "And he loves me, at least according to his letters he loves me. I- I know that this is completely skipping a step in the whole relationship process, but we have been glued to each other since Eddie was born." He reached into his pocket and pulled out the ring he had acquired in Bangor. "I want to ask for his hand in marriage, and I would like your blessing...please."

Frank was silent for a moment as he eyed up the ring before he looked up, meeting Richie's eyes with a smile. "It's beautiful," he hummed. "You know, I couldn't have asked for a better man to marry my son. You have my blessing Richard. I know you'll take good care of him."

Richie felt the weight of the world fall off of his shoulders and he sunk back into the couch, letting out a deep breath. "Thank you- you have no idea how much this means to me. Really- I love Eddie so much, I promise I'll make him so happy."

"Oh I know you will," Frank nodded, patting Richie's shoulder. "You have done a brilliant job so far." He glanced to the door. "He might still be awake, if you want to go see him. If he isn't, I give you permission to stay the night." He laughed at Richie's stunned expression. "Eddie is nineteen, you are twenty one. You are both adults and I was never the firm believer of waiting until marriage. As long as you are safe and careful about it, then I won't say anything."

Richie's cheeks were bright red and he let out a nervous chuckle, "T-Thanks uh- I guess?" He stood up and backed up to the door. As he

left the room and headed down the corridor towards Eddie's bedroom, he could hear Franks echoing laughter. He tried not to let it bother him, not when he had Frank's blessing to ask Eddie to marry him, which he was desperate to do, but he had to plan. He had to make it extra special.

He knocked on the door and stepped back, grinning as he heard Eddie's groan of annoyance coming from the other side of the door. The door swung open and Eddie stood on the other side, ready to yell, when he saw who it was and all the anger drained from his face. "R-Richie?"

"Heya, Eds. Miss me?" Richie smirked and opened his arms as Eddie lunged forward, his arms wrapping around his neck and jumping up so his legs were tight around Richie's waist. "Damn, you really did miss me."

"Shut it, asshole," Eddie mumbled into Richie's neck, his lips pressing kisses to the skin there.

Richie gasped in mock horror. "What terrible language for the future King of Derry. Tut tut Edward." He pulled back so he was staring into Eddie's eyes, closing the distance with a kiss. "Missed you too, love." He carried Eddie back into his room, kicking the door closed behind them and locking it. "Did you have a nice Christmas?"

"Are you seriously asking me about my Christmas when I have my legs wrapped around your waist?" Eddie asked with a laugh as Richie dumped him onto his too large bed. "Does my dad know you're here?" He tangled his fingers into Richie's shirt, pulling him down onto the bed so he was leaning over him.

With a cheeky grin, Richie leaned down, bringing their lips together in a soft, yet passionate kiss. "Actually, your dad just gave me permission to take you to bed, so I think it's all good here don't you?" He lifted a hand, brushing some of Eddie's blonde curls out of his face.

Eddie blinked up at him, his mouth opening and closing in shock before he reached up, bringing Richie down into a deep kiss, deeper than the one they had shared earlier. Richie was suddenly glad that

he had locked the door, as there was no way he wanted anyone walking in and seeing what he planned on doing to Eddie. It was for his eyes, and his eyes only.

* * * * *

For a Royal, Eddie could say with one hundred percent seriousness, that he hated Balls. He hated them more than he hated the way his mother coddled him throughout his childhood. The thought of sitting on a chair and watching people he could barely tolerate dance and drink made him want to gag. It was expected of him though, and the last thing he wanted to do was cause his mother to have an aneurysm for not following protocol.

So here he was, sitting on his 'throne' watching his mother's social club laugh and giggle over champagne and canopies. His father was deep in a conversation with some members of his court, which left Eddie to fend for himself.

Just as he was about to stand up and look for a drink, maybe take a walk outside, someone's hand were covering his eyes and a familiar voice was speaking softly into his ear. "Come with me?" Richie breathed and Eddie turned around, grinning at being saved from his boredom.

"Thank you," Eddie hummed, lacing their fingers together and letting Richie lead him out of the ballroom and into the gardens. He thought they were just going for a walk in the gardens, but Richie walked them deeper and deeper until they were in the more private area. "Where are we going?" He asked.

Richie just winked and grinned back at him, bringing their laced fingers up to kiss Eddie's knuckles. "We used to play here as kids, remember that?" He asked and Eddie nodded his head. There were fairy lights littering the trees and bushes, making the area look nothing but romantic. "Pirates, Cowboys, Knights, you name it. All took place right here."

They walked a little further until they reached the stone seats in the middle, surrounded by flowerbeds. Richie sat down first and tugged Eddie down to sit next to him, smiling softly. Eddie immediately

knew that there was something going on with Richie, he was too quiet and nervous. “Rich?”

“I love you, you know that right?” Richie asked and Eddie slowly nodded his head. “You- you are the best damn thing that has ever happened to me and I never knew that one day we would be like this with each other, but I wouldn’t change it for the world. All those letters you sent me when I was on missions? I’ve got them all saved in a little box on the ship, and I re-read them when I miss you. I re-read our developing relationship over and over again.”

Richie looked as though he was going to cry at this point, his hand squeezing Eddie’s a little tighter as he let out a breath and moved his hand towards his back pocket. “Richie- what are you doing?” Eddie asked quietly. Was Richie about to do what Eddie thought he was about to do?

Before Richie could even reply, the shrill voice of his mother called through the trees and the two of them stiffened up considerably. Eddie knew that his dad was accepting of his relationship with Richie but his mother was a whole other ball game. She never said anything to their faces, but Eddie knew what she thought, and they were less than happy about his partner choice.

“Edward where are you! You know you shouldn’t go running around in the dark all by yourself, you never know what could happen-” His mother came into view and she stopped short as her eyes landed on the two of them. “What is going on here? Edward you shouldn’t be alone out here with him.”

Eddie tried his best not to pinch his nose and he smiled tightly at his mother, “Richie wanted to ask me something before you interrupted. We wanted a moment of privacy, there is nothing wrong with that. How did you even know where to find us?” The area of the garden they were occupying was rather secluded from the rest of the gardens and his mother wouldn’t have known they were here unless she had followed them, or someone had told her.

“That doesn’t matter. You need to come back to the palace now. They are about to have a couple’s dance and it would be nice to see you out on the dancefloor. I am sure Lady Myra will accompany you in

the dance, she has been trying to get your attention all evening.”

That made Eddie stop short and he crossed his arms, shaking his head at his mother, “I’m not going to participate in a couples dance with someone else when my boyfriend is right here. I’ll be dancing with Richie and that is that. If you have a problem with it, you can talk to dad.” With that, he laced his fingers with Richie and pulled him back through the gardens towards the ballroom once more. “I’m sorry...”

Richie chuckled and shook his head, “Oh don’t worry yourself about little old me, Eds. I’m a big boy, I can handle the wrath of Queen Sonia.” He was smiling, but Eddie could tell that Richie was lost in thought and he wanted to ask what his question was for him, but they had already reached the ballroom. “Dance with me?”

“It would be my pleasure,” Eddie accepted, taking Richie’s hand and falling into a dance with him as the music started. It was slow, a couples dance just like his mother had said. His father was dancing with her across the room, yet Eddie could feel her glare on his back as they moved. “What did you want to ask me?” He asked midway through the dance.

He watched Richie’s adam’s apple bob as he swallowed and Eddie had to push any dirty thoughts from his mind as he focused on the love of his life. “Oh, okay. Right.” Richie nodded and squeezed Eddie’s hand tightly. “Edward, I love you. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me. Will you-”

The question died on Richie’s lips as a bony hand wrapped around Eddie’s wrist and pulled them apart from one another. He blinked, coming face to face with a girl he had never seen before in his life, grinning at him. “My turn! I have been just *dying* to dance with you all evening, Your Highness. Your mother promised me a dance at least, and maybe a promise to see each other with chaperones tomorrow?”

“Uhm, who are you?” Eddie asked, the shock of being pulled away from Richie when he was *sure* he was about to propose making him come off as a little rude. “I’m sorry- I was just in the middle of something just then...could you hold that thought for a moment?” He turned around to find Richie but he couldn’t see him anywhere in the

crowd, which caused an uneasy feeling to settle in his stomach.

"I'm Lady Myra," the girl announced, her voice almost resembling his mother's and Eddie *did* wince then. "So, are you going to dance with me or not?"

Eddie blinked at her, the smile gone and replaced with an impatient stare. Oh god, she was the replica of his mother. He shook his head, taking a few steps back. "I am sorry, Lady Myra. I have someone I need to find. I am sure one of the other lovely gentlemen here would be happy to lead you in a dance."

Before anyone could stop him, Eddie made a beeline out of the ballroom and into the quiet corridor. The door closed behind him and he started his walk down the long hall, heading for his room. He just hoped that Richie was there, having grown tired of the crowd as much as Eddie had himself.

He opened the door to his room, breathing a sigh of relief at Richie's form laying on his back on the bed. "Richie..." Eddie breathed and his boyfriend shot up, a troubled look on his face. He quickly locked the door so there was no chance of any more interruptions. "Ask me."

Something flashed in Richie's eyes and he nodded, slipping off of the bed, "Edward Kaspbrak, Your Highness, love and light of my life," Richie started, taking a small box out of his pocket and dropped down onto one knee. "Will you do me the honor of becoming my husband?" He popped the box open to reveal the ring and Eddie felt the tears filling up in his eyes spill down over his cheeks.

Eddie's shocked expression turned into one of complete love and adoration. He swallowed and nodded his head, "Yes, yes I will marry you, Richie. Yes I will!" The last word came out as a giggle as he threw his arms around Richie's neck, kissing him square on the lips. "Yes, yes yes."

"Finally," Richie breathed and his arms wrapped around his waist tight, pulling Eddie closer as the kiss turned from soft to a little deeper. When they pulled away, Richie pressed their foreheads together, "I love you so much," he whispered. Carefully, he took Eddie's hand, slipping the ring onto his left hand's ring finger. "You

have made me the happiest man alive.” Richie moved his hands back to Eddie’s cheeks, cupping his face and wiping the tears away with his thumb. “Though I never thought I’d get to ask you with all the interruptions...”

“I knew what you were trying to do, you know,” Eddie whispered, burying his head into the crook of Richie’s neck and breathing in the scent. He wanted to savour this moment for as long as he could before someone, or something, separated them again. “You’re not very subtle.”

Richie chuckled and slowly backed them up to the bed, sitting down and tugging Eddie into his lap. “You’re going to hate me in a second though,” he spoke quietly and Eddie felt dread fill up in his stomach. He knew what came after those words from Richie. It meant another mission, and time apart from one another.

“Please, can’t someone else go on this mission instead?” Eddie almost begged, his fingers tightening in the lapels of Richie’s jacket that he was still wearing for some reason. He pushed it off of his shoulders and leaned down to press a few kisses to Richie’s neck, careful not to mark the skin. “We can celebrate properly if you stay...”

“I know what you’re trying to do, Your Highness,” Richie breathed, running his hands up and down Eddie’s back, making him shiver. “It would totally be working if this wasn’t such an important mission and not just one someone else could take on for me.”

Eddie sighed and nodded his head, knowing that Richie’s job was important to him and no amount of begging would stop him going out to sea. He only wished that he would be able to go along with him one day, but his mother would shut that suggestion down so fast. All he could do was sit in his palace and wait for Richie to return to him safely. “You’ll be safe yeah?”

Richie nodded his head, pressing a kiss to Eddie’s hair, “I’ll be back before you know it.”

* * * * *

“Please, Your Highness I need you to pay attention to me. Your

studies are important you know.” Eddie’s tutor snapped at him and he whipped his head around, away from the window for the eighth time that morning. “Alright, now what is the answer to this sum I have written?”

Eddie internally sighed, resisting the urge to look back out of the window to catch a glimpse of the golden sails from the Royal Vessel. Richie had been gone for three months, leaving a few days after their engagement and he was itching to see him again. According to both Richie’s last letter and his father’s correspondence with Wentworth, the ship should be arriving in the port any day now.

It was clear that his mother knew Eddie was anticipating Richie’s arrival, and had therefore filled his time with extra studies as to keep him occupied. Not that it was working, as Eddie’s head was so far away from math that it made no difference.

“47,” He replied to his tutor easily, resting his chin on his hand. “We’ve been at this for hours, please can we take a break? I feel like my head is going to burst from all the calculations.”

The tutor, Mr Savron, turned his nose up at Eddie’s request before closing the math book. In that moment, Eddie was so convinced that he had won the argument, until Mr Savron pulled out an English textbook and pushed it across the table. “Well, we shall work on your literature then Your Highness.”

Eddie let out a long sigh, and was about to open the book when the sound of the arrival horn from the port echoed through the room from his window. In a flash, ignoring Mr Savron’s protests, Eddie jumped up and headed to the window, looking out in glee as the Royal Vessel came into sight, heading straight for port.

“Richie...” Eddie breathed and with his mind made up, he jumped down from the window ledge and rushed straight out the door. Behind him, he could hear Mr Savron’s demands for him to come back, but there was no way Eddie was going to sit through hours of gruelling lessons when Richie was back.

In his haste, he almost knocked over a few people, yelling an apology as he continued on his way to the main entrance and down the stone

steps to the gate. At this point, a few of the families of the other sailors were realising that their loved ones were home, making the port an exceptionally busy place to be.

Good thing Eddie was small and determined. He ducked in and out of the crowd, his heart beating faster and faster the closer he got to the dock. By the time he had arrived, the ship was anchored down and the men were spilling off the ship, running into the arms of their loved ones.

Just as Eddie reached the front of the crowd, he spotted Richie disembarking from the ship, a bag swung over his shoulder as he conversed with one of the other sailors. It never failed to amaze Eddie just how much Richie changed when he was out at sea, and he always came back looking just a little bit older and scruffier than he did when he left.

“Richie!” Eddie couldn’t help but scream out, catching his fiancé’s attention as well as a few of the other people standing beside him. They all started to whisper to each other, about how they were unknowingly in the presence of the prince, but Eddie couldn’t care less, his eyes were focused on Richie who was now grinning from ear to ear.

“Eds...” Eddie heard Richie voice from the distance before he broke into a run, practically throwing himself into Richie’s arms and being thankful for the fitness regime the sailors had to go through in order to qualify. Richie’s arms caught him under his thighs as Eddie wrapped his legs around his waist, arms around his neck as he leaned down to bring their lips together in a long awaited kiss.

Richie wasted no time kissing Eddie back as though he were struggling to breathe and Eddie was his oxygen. Of course, as they were in public they had to keep it as...tame as possible, therefore Eddie pulled away with a pout and let him fall back out of Richie’s arms and onto the ground. “Hi,” he whispered.

“Hey Eds...miss me?” Richie teased, pecking Eddie’s nose. He grinned even more at the way Eddie’s face scrunched up at the action and snorted as Eddie pushed him away. Eddie turned on his heel to walk away but Richie wrapped a hand around his wrist, spinning him back

and into his arms, “Hey, I love you.”

Eddie’s heart swelled up and his cheeks turned a lovely rosey red. “I love you too, idiot,” he mumbled, pushing up on his toes to peck Richie’s lips gently. “I missed you so much, try and not go away for so long next time, yeah?” He always knew what Richie’s answer would be when Eddie asked that question, but it didn’t stop him from asking it. This time though, he was given a different answer completely.

“Actually...I’m taking some time off. We have a wedding to plan and I really can’t be gone at sea all that time and leave you alone with your mother and...Mr whatever his name is. That doesn’t seem like something a good fiance would do.” Richie winked. “Then I was thinking, for our honeymoon, you come with me and I actually show you all those places I tell you about in my letters?”

At this point, Eddie was crying and he nodded his head frantically, throwing his arms around Richie’s neck and hugging him tightly. Eddie knew that they would have a lot of things to discuss, both with his parents and with the court, but it could all be left until later. Right then all Eddie wanted to do was hug his fiance, happy knowing that he wasn’t going anywhere without him, not for a long, long time.

The End...(or is it just the beginning?)